

Great Bay and the Seacoast



Watersheds

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river or lake and is nature's way of dividing up the landscape. New England includes many eco-systems that, by virtue of their ecological value, recreational value, or proximity to large populations, hold a special significance to us. EPA New England is focusing particular attention and resources on these special places. Working closely with our federal, state and local partners, these community based initiatives are delivering tangible environmental improvements to these watershed areas.

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What Makes Great Bay and the Seacoast Special?

- The Great Bay is a relatively pristine region with a diversity of habitats that are important for waterfowl, migratory birds, and rare species such as bald eagles.
- Shellfish, eelgrass, salt marsh and other marine plants and organisms can be found in the area's harbors and bays.
- There are a variety of rare species and communities such as Atlantic White Cedar swamps.
- The area contains groundwater wells in towns which have few alternate sources of drinking water.

Why Does Great Bay Need Special Attention?

- Storm water runoff needs to be reduced in order to improve water quality.
- Habitat areas need protection, especially along the estuary and streams, for water quality and wildlife improvement.

What are the Long Term Goals?

- Triple the acreage of open shellfish beds (to 75% of all beds) and triple number of harvestable clams and oysters in NH estuaries.
- Preserve open space in Great Bay watershed area.
- Increase the acreage and value of salt marshes, wetlands and other estuarine habitats.

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress has Been Made?

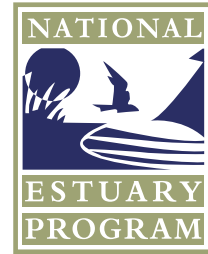
- Over 100 acres of shellfish beds were reopened.
- Over 3,000 acres of waterfront habitat were protected along Great Bay by outright ownership and/or conservation easements.
- Twenty million dollars have been raised for additional land protection.
- Over 150 acres of salt marsh and eelgrass have been restored.
- The final NEP Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan was completed.

What Major Actions are Planned for 2002?

- Protect an additional 500 acres of habitat.
- Raise additional money for land protection.
- Open additional acres of spawning grounds and shellfish beds.
- Restore additional acres of salt marsh and eelgrass.



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Who Are The Partners?

EPA New England • NH Department of Environmental Services • NH Office of State Planning • NH Fish and Game • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service • University of New Hampshire • NH Audubon • Nature Conservancy • Society for the Protection of NH Forests • Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve and NOAA • Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership • Exeter River Watershed • Lamprey River Watershed • Rockingham Planning Commission • Strafford Planning Commission • 20+ local towns

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Legend

- Surface Water
- Rivers
- State Boundary
- Town Boundary



Data Sources: Political boundaries from GRANIT, MassGIS, and Maine CGIS at 1:24,000. Surface water from USGS at 1:100,000. February 6, 2001



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Note: EPA-New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.

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